GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4518
ANSWERED ON:18.12.2000
FELLING OF TREES
MAHESHWAR SINGH;SURESH CHANDEL

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned `Sikkim cops stumble upon massive tree felling racket` appearing in the Hindustan Times dated November 11, 2000;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to stop rapid deforestation in Sikkim Forest so as to save the fragile Himalayan eco-system;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken against erring officers involved in tree felling racket?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) Yes Sir, the Government of Sikkim has reported that the departmental enquiry revealed that less than 100 trees have been felled. The matter has also attracted the attention of the Sikkim High Court and the Court has directed CBI to investigate further and find out the truth.

(b)&(c)The latest report of the Forest Survey of India have revealed that there has been a decrease in the forest cover by 11 Sq.km. in the State of Sikkim. The management and development of the forests is primarily the responsibility of the State Government and funds are provided as additionality by the Central Government through various afforestation schemes of National Afforestation Eco-Development Board. The States have been requested to strengthen the forest protection machinery and involve the local people in forest protection and development under Joint Forest Management Programme.

(d) The Government of Sikkim have reported that sincethere is no verdict of the High Court against any officer as yet, the question of taking action does not arise.